NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

Vol. 44/No. 5

April 2001

A Sense of Security

by LESLEY-ANN BROWNE

I think I am getting old. Not in the number of years as such, although they are creeping up there, but in my views and opinions. I no longer seem to have the same level of patience that I did several years ago. My tolerance level for those who destroy the property of others is especially low.

We called the police the other evening because we witnessed a theft from a new house being built near us. As four teenaged boys carried wood, gyproc and supplies from the new home we waited for the police to arrive. The boys entered the house three times, each leaving with arm loads of goods before the police finally arrived upon the scene. This was not a late night robbery but at seven in the evening. I guess they thought no one would notice them creeping in and out of a vacant house several times with arm loads of wood. The police caught one thief as the others were much better at running than they were at stealing.

When the police officer caught this fellow, he brought him back to our house for us to identify. The police car parked in front of our house for this to take place. All I could think of was that he was getting a good look at us, our house, cars, and property. This was not exactly a wise move by the police officer and a little unnerving for us.

When they brought the young "gentleman" home his father could not understand why it was a theft charge. The police informed us that his father said his son was "only stealing some wood." I suppose it has a different meaning for him but theft is theft where I come from.

The fear is that we will be targets in the future. We live in a "nice" neighbourhood but it is a pathway for many people as they cut through streets to get to schools and parks. Our fence receives abuse regularly and thus far one tree has sustained damage. The hope is that these were random acts of vandalism. The annoying part is that we should not have to question whether they were random or not. We are not living in fear but there is always a question for the safety of our property.

I believe in respect for property of others and have taught that to my own child. I have to question whether there is more vandalism taking place these days or if it is that I now have something that I have worked for that I do not want to have destroyed. As a child I remember puzzling over the protectiveness of older persons concerning their property and thinking that they were overreacting when something like this occurred. So if getting old means having respect and valuing what I have then I guess that I am indeed old. The newly installed sensor lights and alarm system may be an overreaction but at least we have a sense of security.

THE bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1.
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Subscription Rate: $16 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
June Issue: May 1

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, Canadian Public Relations Society, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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USED AND ABUSED

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO A LETTER THAT appeared in your January/February 2001 issue of *The Bulletin* entitled "Underground Professional Development". What an appropriate title for what seems to be going on at that school! As a former substitute teacher, I was appalled and angered by one section of that letter. I quote: "At this school, when substitutes are called in for a teacher who has a preparation period, the substitutes are being used to free up a teacher so that he/she can observe other teachers in action." BEING USED are the operative words here. ABUSED is also another way of putting it! Does the substitute have any say in the matter, I wonder? Not likely! Of course, he/she can't say they won't do it because we all know what the consequences will be, don't we?

I'm not surprised that the name of the teacher and school remains anonymous. They should be ashamed of themselves. That kind of behavior is completely unprofessional. Maybe the NLTA needs to speak out considering substitutes are also bonifide members of this Association. I expected, at the very least, an Editor's comment at the end of that letter speaking out against this blatant example of teacher abuse. But none was forthcoming. So, does this mean that the NLTA now condones this and other practices that abuse substitute teachers?

Yes, I agree that we need extra time to increase contact and communication between teachers but NOT at the expense of our dedicated substitute teachers!

Shirley O'Quinn
A concerned teacher who DOES NOT wish to remain anonymous

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NLTA

BRANCH ELECTIONS

MAY – JUNE 2001

- Would you like to be more involved in decisions affecting your professional and personal future?
- Do you feel you have skills or abilities which you can offer to your professional Association?
- Would you like to be more informed about, and involved in, the internal operations of your Association?

Then consider becoming a member of your branch leadership team by offering yourself for a position on the branch executive when branch elections are held this spring. **Contact a member of your branch executive or your NLTA School Representative for more details.**

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

PARADISE

2001 Christmas Card Contest winner announced

Jordan Smith

Jordan Smith, a Grade 5 student at Paradise Elementary has been chosen as winner of the 2001 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. Jordan receives a $75 cash award and a framed copy of his winning entry. His winning design will appear on the NLTA's official Christmas card which will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2001. The theme for the 2001 contest was *Christmas Memories*.

Jordan Smith's winning design for the 2001 NLTA Christmas Card.

Second place was awarded to Jenna Edwards, a Grade 5 student at St. Michael's School in Goose Bay. Third place was awarded to Janaya Rose, a Grade 5 student at Humber Elementary in Corner Brook. The Communications Committee of the NLTA chooses the theme and judges the entries for the Christmas Card Contest. A total of 348 entries were received this year.

Courtney Riggs

BAY ROBERTS

T-shirt design for 2001 Heritage Fairs selected

Courtney Riggs, a Grade 7 student at Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts has been selected as the designer of this year's Heritage Fair t-shirt. Courtney's design depicts this year's theme, *Communications and Marconi*, and will be worn by students at Regional Fairs taking place in the province in April and May, and by students representing this province at the National Heritage Camp to be held in Kamloops, British Columbia in July.

Courtney was one of approximately 1,300 students who participated in the annual design contest. She received $100 and t-shirts for her family members. The following regional winners each received $25: Tiffany Sampson, Balbo Elementary, Shoal Harbour; Shane Simms, John Watkins Academy, Hermitage; Rebecca Marshall, Presentation Junior High, Corner Brook; Valerie Parsons, St. Anthony Elementary; Barry Broomfield, St. Michael's School, Goose Bay; and Riya Soni, J.R. Smallwood Primary/Elementary School, Wabush. All designs have been sent to the National Committee where some will be made into tattoos and be distributed at the Regional Heritage Fairs.

Heritage Fairs are held across Canada in May of each year. The intent is to encourage students in Grades 4 to 9 to recognize the value of their heritage and culture by producing a project depicting some aspect of Newfoundland or Canadian heritage. The Fairs have a close connection to several areas of the curriculum and are held in eight regions across Newfoundland and Labrador – Avalon, Vista, Burin, Central, Western, Northern Peninsula/Southern Labrador, Labrador East, and Labrador West. Fifteen students will be selected from the Regional Fairs to represent Newfoundland and Labrador at the National Heritage Camp.

HARBOUR GRACE

Students enjoy winter fun day

On January 26, staff and students at Harbour Grace Primary held a winter fun day to coincide with the language arts theme of "Snow and Winter". In the morning every student was treated to a sleigh ride compliments of Terry Crocker and Beauty the horse. Students loved the sleigh rides and thought Beauty was "beautiful".

Students then had an opportunity to go sliding and to have a snowmobile ride. So that all students could

have a turn, a cart was attached to the snowmobile and students were led around the school grounds.

After the outdoor activities, students were treated to hot chocolate and cupcakes. Several mothers volunteered to provide the cupcakes and baked 240 of them for all students and staff to enjoy.

Students at Harbour Grace Primary enjoy a sleigh ride during their winter fun day.

One Grade 4 student summed up the day's activities for all. He said, "It was the best day I ever had in school." Daphne Bussey, teacher and vice-principal at the school, says thanks must go to the parents who came with the horse and sleigh and snowmobiles, and for those who provided wonderful refreshments.

LABRADOR CITY

Interactive Learning Centre virtually exploring the globe

If you needed proof that the earth is getting smaller, figuratively speaking, here it is! In February, the Labrador West Centre for Interactive Learning officially opened its video conference facilities in the College of the North Atlantic, Labrador City, by reaching out to the world. Through the sponsorship of the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOCC) and the support of the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial's School of Continuing Education, the Centre is sporting the latest in videoconferencing technology and they are ready to show it off.

Linda Nuotio, operations co-ordinator of the Centre states, "Think about this! Imagine flying a whole class down to Atlanta from Labrador for a field trip. Through a virtual field trip, students will have close to the same experience for less than $200."

"Another advantage of videoconferencing is that complex information, like developing communications technologies for NASA's space missions, can easily be relayed regardless of the distance involved," explains Ms. Nuotio.

"It's not surprising, then, that IOCC is such a driving force behind the establishment of the facility. The training requirements of company employees have grown beyond local capacities, as technology has become incorporated into the mine's operation. Videoconferencing provides the solution they need."

The facility has proven its worth since installation last August with interactive children's camps and multi-point meetings being just two examples of activities it made possible.

For more information on the Centre for Interactive Learning, contact Linda Nuotio at 709-944-2848 or by e-mail at lnuotio@labwest.northatlantic.nf.ca.

BAIE VERTE

Student appointed to SchoolNet Youth Advisory Board

Chelsea Howard, a Grade 7 student at Baie Verte Middle School, has been selected to sit on the SchoolNet Youth Advisory Board. The board allows young people the opportunity to let the federal government know their views about computers and the Internet, how this technology affects learning, society and their future. Recommendations made by the board will be used to help define priorities for SchoolNet's youth services so that youth can be better prepared for the new information economy.

Chelsea Howard at work on her computer.

Chelsea will join an on-line forum and work on activities with other board members from across Canada. In the spring of 2001 there will be a face-to-face meeting of the board in Ottawa where students will participate in further activities and finalize the youth board's recommendations. They will also get a chance to meet the Honorary Chair of the SchoolNet Youth Advisory Board, Senator Landon Pearson.

Chelsea submitted an on-line application and posted an essay in response to the question "How does technology affect your learning?" Her essay can be viewed at http://members.tripod.ca/pathoward/schoolne.htm.

VICTORIA

The Newfoundland Herald's Teacher of the Year

Chris Snelgrove, a Grade 5 teacher at Persalvic Elementary in Victoria has been selected as *The Newfoundland Herald's* Teacher of the Year.

Chris graduated from Memorial University with a Music degree and then decided to earn his Education degree. He is an accomplished violinist who spent weekends during his teenage years travelling from his home in Gambo to St. John's to perform and train with the Newfoundland Symphony Youth Orchestra.

In addition to his homeroom duties, Chris teaches classes in information technology and music, as well as helps out with school dances, coaches sports teams, works with the school choir, and is hoping to get the school band up and running again.

Music is melded with computers as Chris passes his knowledge and love of music on to students. Several years ago he arranged a fundraiser so the school could purchase a computer/keyboard system. His students can play in the music room and what they perform comes out on the computer screen. It was this system that Chris used to compose the musical accompaniment to go with Persalvic's 25th Anniversary year song with the lyrics written by students.

The nomination for Teacher of the Year was sent to *The Newfoundland Herald* by Kayla Priddle, a Grade 7 student at Persalvic Elementary.

(Details for this article were taken from the February 27-March 5, 2001 issue of The Newfoundland Herald.)

ST. JOHN'S

Showcasing school achievements at Spotlight on Schools Fair

With the media present and a full house of teachers, parents, students and administrators, Avalon East School Board Director, Brian Shortall, and Chairman, Cyril Hayden launched the two-day Spotlight on Schools Fair at the Holiday Inn in St. John's on February 1, 2001.

Ann Tilley, a teacher at Macdonald Drive Junior High School in St. John's, and one of the Fair participants, estimates that more than 50 schools were represented. Each was allocated "booth" space to showcase innovative and creative student accomplishments. Eye-catching displays boasted of student produced art work, musical instruments, booklets, clay representations of scenes, literature-inspired paintings, silk-screening, photographs, Power Point displays, athletic awards, school web pages and posters.

"We, at Macdonald Drive Junior High, showcased our Music, French Immersion and ESL Programs," says Ms. Tilley. "We noted our parent volunteers and student accomplishments. I spoke to visitors about our Math Help program and our 160 person Dinner Theater. Many had seen Carl Wells' weather show originating from our 14 room Haunted House."

In addition to receiving a copy of the school's *Bulletin* and viewing their booth, visitors were treated to a professionally produced informational video about Macdonald Drive Junior High. "This video is particularly beneficial to parents who wish to know about our school before their children are enrolled here," says Ms. Tilley.

While visiting school displays during Thursday's evening session, Ms. Tilley spoke with fellow educators about their school accomplishments. Derek Stevenson, Guidance Counsellor from Queen Elizabeth Regional High School in Foxtrap detailed his school's efforts to share important school dates with parents. "Their Queen Elizabeth School Calendar is a project to be admired," states Ms. Tilley. Bruce Lane, a Librarian/Learning Resources teacher at Mary Queen of Peace School enthusiastically discussed his school and their web page.

An ingenious purple and yellow "Magic of Macpherson" logo caught everyone's eye. Displayed were T-shirts imprinted with their school logo and a computer with which visitors might surf Macpherson's web pages.

Teachers and students showcase their achievements at the Spotlight on Schools Fair.

Located beside Macdonald Drive Junior High School's booth, Margaret Best artistically displayed a collection of student work produced in the Art Smarts Program. As well, St. Pius X Elementary School played a video of students painting their school's wall murals. "Their paintings and three-dimensional fish mobiles were very attractive," comments Ms. Tilley.

Mobile Central High School detailed their school's recent innovations. School Guidance Counsellor Fred Colbert was particularly proud of his school's Breakfast Program which offers breakfasts to all students. Additionally, his school has initiated a successful Second-Step Program which is designed to reduce bullying and anti-social behavior in the school.

Ms. Tilley says that as she talked and mingled with people attending this successful and worthwhile fair, she felt from everyone a strong sense of accomplishment. Obviously pleased with the schools' displays, Mr. Shortall remarked that he would like to see the Board hold an annual "Spotlight on Schools" event. Mr. Hayden noted in his opening comments that students, parents and teachers should be commended for the success that is evident in our school system. "From my perspective, I agree," comments Ms. Tilley. "I know that I am very proud to be a small part of all that happens at my school – Macdonald Drive Junior High!"

Making the Transition to Post-Secondary Education

The move from high school to university or college is an exciting but also challenging time for most students. This period of transition poses special difficulties that require careful prior planning for students who have disabilities or special needs. An information session was held at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's on February 1, 2001, to help students with a range of disabilities develop a better understanding of some of the issues that need to be considered before making the move to a post-secondary institution.

Carolyn Tilley, Guidance Counsellor at Bishops College in St. John's, spoke about the importance of planning ahead. She noted that students should think about their own strengths as well as weaknesses. She also talked about the need for careful planning at the high school level and mentioned the use of strategies such as reduced course load.

Dr. Michael Doyle gave an interesting presentation about the services offered through the Counselling Centre at Memorial University, that aims to help students become more effective learners. He spoke about a credit course in learning strategies that is useful for many students and is not designed exclusively for students with disabilities. The course aims to teach about theories of cognitive psychology and their direct applications to learning by teaching practical learning strategies.

Ruth North of the Blunden Centre, Memorial University, outlined some of the services available for students with appropriate documentation. She emphasized that students with learning disabilities must have current comprehensive psycho-educational assessment reports and suggested that assessments and related recommendations for accommodations should follow the guidelines provided by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

Dan Goodyear, special needs coordinator at College of the North Atlantic described ways in which they are trying to meet individual needs by using a model of program planning similar to the Pathways model used in the school system. He stated that students will need up to date documentation completed by qualified professionals if they want to be considered for specific accommodations and supports.

Two students, Laurie Mooney, College of the North Atlantic, and Nicholas Hender of the Association for Students with Disabilities at Memorial University (MUNDISC), gave very interesting and inspirational talks. Both speakers illustrated that they needed good organization, forward planning, self-advocacy, flexibility and assertiveness to be successful. They said that most professors are very helpful and sympathetic to their needs but, in addition, students need to accept all the supports that are available from post-secondary institutions and from student support organizations.

Further meetings are planned for students with disabilities who are transitioning from junior high to high school and from elementary to junior high school. For information please contact Anne Murray, Learning Disabilities Consultant, Avalon East School Board, Tel: 709-753-9124, ext. 253 or e-mail amurray@aesb.ca.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Johnson Scholarships and Academic Grants awarded

The Johnson Family established the Johnson Insurance business in Newfoundland more than 120 years ago and it has now grown to be one of the leading insurance and benefit organizations in Canada. The Johnson Scholarships and Academic Grants were established and funded in 1998 by Paul J. Johnson and members of the Corporate Leadership Team. Since that time, a total of 100 Scholarships and Academic Grants have been awarded annually, each valued at $1,000. Scholarships are available to dependents of Johnson Group Members who are in their graduating year of senior high school. Academic Grants are also available to assist those Group Members (or their dependents) who are returning to full-time post-secondary studies following an absence of two or more years, as well as those beginning full-time studies as mature students.

Johnson Inc. Client Members/Employees, and their dependents, are eligible to apply. Clients are those who sponsor Insurance and/or Benefit programs through Johnson Inc. These Clients include associations, not-for-profit groups, trade unions, businesses, institutions, government entities, and crown corporations. Members/Employees will be enrolled in the Client Sponsored Benefit Plan administered by Johnson Inc. or hold a Johnson Inc. Home-Auto or MEDOC® Policy.

In 2000, 12 Scholarships and two Academic Grants were awarded to Members/dependents of the NLTA. The winners were: **Scholarship Recipients**: Heidi Matthews, Bishops College; Jeremy White, North Shore Collegiate; Jeremy Nippard, Stephenville High School; Chelsea Hellings, Holy Trinity Central High; Janet Cook, Stephenville High School; Melanie Reader, Pasadena Academy; Michael Goodyear, Mountain View Collegiate; Rebecca Coffey, Gonzaga High School; Anne Marie Carey, Regina High School; Robert Harvey, Upper Canada College; Jane Hurley, Marystown Central High School; Denise Vatcher, St. John Central High. **Academic Grant Recipients:** Joanne Gallagher-Duffy and Sandra Nippard.

Johnson Incorporated congratulates each of these individuals on their achievement, and wishes them continued success in their academic endeavors.

Further information and application forms for these awards may be obtained from Johnson Incorporated, 95 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's. Or, to receive an application by mail, call 1-888-737-1088. Information and on-line enrollment is now also available through the Johnson Inc. web site at www.johnson.ca.

Johnson Incorporated wishes to thank the NLTA for its cooperation in promoting the existence of these Scholarships and Academic Grants to its Members.

OTTAWA

Strategy to promote cyber-safety

In February, Brian Tobin, Minister of Industry, and Anne McLellan, Minister of Justice, announced the launch of the *Canadian Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use*, a new initiative that will equip Canadian teachers and parents with tools and resources to help them protect children against the dangers of illegal and offensive Internet content.

The strategy aims to increase public awareness of issues relating to illegal and offensive Internet content by providing parents and teachers with access to a broad collection of tools and resources, highlighted in a 24-page booklet.

The strategy also invokes the support of Internet service providers and other companies that manage the creation of, or access to, online content. The Canadian Association of Internet Providers has responded with the creation of a voluntary code of conduct to help protect consumers in the event that illegal content is inadvertently hosted on their computer systems. By encouraging an open dialogue between consumers and Internet service providers, this strategy also seeks to further engage the support of these companies in addressing illegal and offensive on-line content.

Members of the Canadian Cable Television Association have developed two public service announcements which will be aired on community channels and local advertising opportunities to build public awareness of the strategy.

The *Canadian Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use* is built upon an Industry Canada-led broad-based partnership of private sector, public sector and non-government organizations. Industry Canada coordinated the following group of participating government departments and agencies: the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency; Canadian Heritage; Criminal Intelligence Services of Canada; Health Canada; Human Resources Development Canada; the Department of Justice; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and; the Department of the Solicitor General. Non-government partners included the Canadian Association of Internet Service Providers, the Canadian Cable Television Association, the Canadian Library Association and the Media Awareness Network.

A copy of the booklet is available by calling 613-947-7466, or writing to Information Distribution Centre, Communications Branch, Industry Canada,

Room 268D, West Tower, 235 Queen Street, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0H5.The electronic version of *Canadian Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use* can be viewed, downloaded or printed at www.connect.gc.ca/cyberwise.

CANADA

National survey of children includes school year

During this school year, close to 40,000 Canadian children and their parents will be interviewed in their homes. In April and May of this year, the teachers and principals of some of these children will also be surveyed. This whole exercise forms part of the most recent data-gathering phase of a major national survey – the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) is a unique study of Canadians from birth to adulthood: comprehensive and longitudinal, it measures the development and well-being of children and youth over time. Every two years, from 1994 through to 2018, the same children are contacted and interviewed at home. They and their parents or guardians provide answers to questions about school, health, behaviour, feelings, relationships with family and friends, family functioning and many other themes.

The questions are designed to uncover the results of interactions that occur throughout a child's development and socialization, such as the effects of family structure, socio-economic status and schooling. Federal and provincial governments (including many provincial departments of education), school boards, and academics will use survey results to develop policies and strategies designed to help young people follow healthy, active and rewarding lives.

To construct a complete picture of child development, information is also gathered from the teachers and principals of some children. The Teacher Questionnaire gathers information on the child's academic achievement and behaviour at school, along with educational practices in the classroom, and the classroom environment. The Principal Questionnaire collects information on the school's educational practices, the availability of educational resources, and the social climate of the school.

If you have any questions or comments, please call 1-888-408-8897 (toll free) until the end of June. For more information on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, visit the Human Resources Development Canada web site (www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb), or the Statistics Canada web site (www.statcan.ca).

New tools to help teachers get girls excited about math, sciences and technology

Remember that Barbie doll, the one who said math gave her a headache? Well it seems girls are still battling attitudes like that when it comes to math, sciences and technology. That's why the WTN Foundation, a non-profit organization created and funded by WTN, has come up with two new tools to help teachers get girls excited about math, sciences and technology.

The first is a poster for educators and parents outlining ten tips to get girls tech-savvy called "The All Girl Technology Countdown", and the second is an on-line research document.

"We know from our work with girls at our girls' TV Camps across Canada that they are interested in these subjects," says WTN Foundation Executive Director Shirley Muir. "It's just that during the 'Tween' years (ages 10-12) they become disinterested for a number of reasons. Sometimes it's because of difference in learning styles or societal attitudes."

The WTN Foundation 10 Tips poster offers a list of suggestions on how to deal with these issues, including creating mentoring programs involving women in IT careers, letting girls know how much they can earn in a technical career and showing girls just how many technical careers are out there.

The on-line document is a compilation of the research and allows educators to connect with others on-line who are dealing with the same challenges.

The WTN Foundation offers many educational and training programs including a Girls TV Camp and TV Club where veteran women television technicians teach teenage girls lighting, audio, camera and editing skills needed to produce videos.

To get free copies of *The All Girl Technology Countdown* posters for your school call the WTN Foundation at 1-800-575-7317 or e-mail: foundation@wtn.ca or . You can preview the poster and access the full research document at www.wtn.ca/foundation.

Article 9
Redundancy, Reassignment & Layoff

by DON ASH

Both the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements contain provisions to deal with teacher redundancy, reassignment and layoff. The articles in the agreements are quite similar, however there are unique aspects applicable in Labrador West. This particular article makes reference to the provisions of the Provincial Agreement.

The relevant article (Article 9) provides, in the event of redundant teaching positions, a method of staff reassignment based upon seniority and subject to capability. The provisions of Article 9 are subject to more than one interpretation; the view contained within this article represents the NLTA's understanding and interpretation.

Teachers are reminded that the Collective Agreement incorporates several amendments to Article 9. These are specifically referenced in the following information.

Seniority

Clause 9.01 indicates that "seniority" is to be determined on the basis of the total length of time employed as a teacher in Newfoundland and Labrador, both before and after the signing date of the current Collective Agreement. If the length of teaching experience defined above is equal, then the teacher to be declared surplus shall be determined by the school board.

All service as referenced immediately above (including substitute and/or replacement time) is to be totaled to determine the relative seniority of teachers within a school community, school system or school district.

Clause [9.01(e)] requires that the calculation of seniority for purposes of reassignment and layoff shall be done as at May 7 in the school year at the end of which the reassignment and/or layoff is to be effective.

Redundancy and Reassignment

Clause 9.02 outlines the procedure to be followed if it is determined by a school board that teaching position(s) within a school have become redundant.

First the school board must define the program of studies within the schools in the district and assign teachers to ensure appropriate programs can be implemented. If in determining the program to be implemented and the number of teaching units to be assigned to a school, the school determines it will have fewer teachers in a given school one year than in the preceding year, it must determine redundancies and provide for reassignment or layoff of personnel.

Second, the school board must prepare a seniority list based on four groupings: tenured teachers; teachers on a one-year probationary contract; teachers on a two-year probationary contract; and teachers on probationary contracts in accordance with Article 7.05.

Third, the teacher or teachers on staff with the least seniority are to be reassigned from the staff unless certain conditions apply. The least senior individual can remain on staff only if that person is occupying a position which cannot be accommodated by reassignment of other more senior staff members. Clause 9.02 provides that the school board must reassign senior teachers of that school to the remaining positions within the school so as to accommodate the right of senior teachers to remain in the school. There is, then, a responsibility on the school board to realign all teachers in the school, if necessary, to ensure as far as possible that the most senior teachers are retained in that school.

Article 9 does not deal with degrees of capability. The school board is not to determine whether the senior teachers are more capable or most capable, but only whether they are capable of fulfilling the remaining positions.

Clause 9.03 outlines the steps to be followed in the event that a redundant teacher cannot be retained on the staff of a given school. Such redundant teachers have priority, based on seniority, and subject to capability to perform the job function required, to teaching positions held by junior teachers in the following of

priority: (i) within the community, and (ii) within the nearest community, within the school district, where such a position exists.

Any teacher who cannot be reassigned in his/her present school through the application of Clause 9.02 is to be reassigned, if possible, within the community. If that is not possible based on the teacher's seniority and capability, he/she is to be reassigned within the nearest community where there is a position, held by a junior teacher, which the redundant teacher is capable of filling.

The employer must reassign the redundant teachers in order of seniority to positions held by junior teachers. A teacher declared redundant in a school does not necessarily select a position that he or she wants; rather, the redundant teacher must be reassigned by the school board in accordance with the Collective Agreement. Notwithstanding this, there is often much discussion and agreement reached between the school board and the teacher in determining the exact position to which the teacher is to be reassigned.

Timelines

Layoffs are effective only at the end of the contract year, and any teacher who is to be laid off must be notified in writing on or before May 7 in the current contract year. A teacher who has been reassigned and has been notified (in writing) must advise the school board (in writing) within 10 calendar days of acceptance or rejection of the position.

Recall

Clause 9.10(a) provides a recall procedure for a two-year period following layoff for teachers who were laid off and are still unemployed as teachers or are employed in less than a full-time position. Clause 9.10(b) stipulates that teachers who have received an offer of recall in accordance with 9.10(a) must reply within five days or the offer will be deemed to be rejected. Clause 9.10(c), subject to Article 6.03, gives priority in hiring to laid-off teachers for substitute, replacement and term positions during the period of eligibility for recall. It is the responsibility of the teacher who is eligible for recall to inform the school board, prior to September 1 in each of the subsequent two school years, of their interest and availability to fill positions that become vacant on or after September 1.

Refusal of Reassignment

Clause 9.13 states that "a teacher who refuses reassignment in accordance with this Article 9 shall be deemed to have been laid off". The strongest advice we can offer teachers is to, under no circumstance, immediately refuse a reassignment in writing. If any member has strong reservations about the measures adopted or reassignment offered by the board with respect to Article 9, that member should contact the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA for advice.

Grievance Procedure

It should be remembered that Article 31 of the Collective Agreement provides a detailed grievance procedure which may be followed in the event of an alleged violation of the Agreement. It is essential to realize that strict time lines are provided in that article and must be adhered to if any grievance is to have integrity. A grievance must be filed within 10 days of the discovery or occurrence of an alleged infraction.

A more detailed analysis of this particular article is available in Benefits and Economic Services Infosheet No. 15. Particular inquiries with respect to this topic should be directed to the Benefits & Economic Services Division.

Don Ash is Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services Division, with the NLTA.

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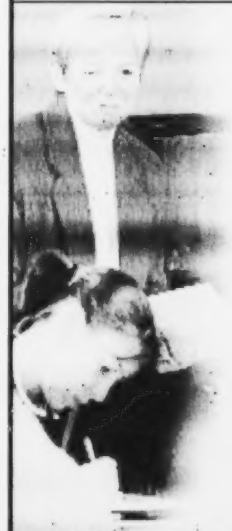

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Plan Ahead and Register Early
Pre-Retirement Seminars

by DON ASH

"It is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come-first-served basis."

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's seven Pre-Retirement Seminars being held in the fall of 2001. Clause 18.11 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

During the Fall of 2000, NLTA hosted seven Pre-Retirement Seminars – one each in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. These seminars were held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling, and were attended by 403 teacher participants and 190 spouses.

Information sessions dealt with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, NLTA Group Insurance, Psychological Preparation for Retirement, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time was set aside for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

From all reports, the seminars were regarded as quite successful. Notwithstanding this however, there have been a number of recommendations for improvement and our plans for the Fall of 2001 will try to incorporate those various suggestions. Preparation is already under way to hold seven seminars during October, November and early December 2001 in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's.

The sessions will be two days in duration. The program begins with registration from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. on Day One. The first agenda item begins at 9:30 a.m. with the afternoon session concluding at approximately 3:30 p.m. On that first evening, there is also a 7:00 p.m. session devoted to Psychological Preparation for Retirement, which runs for approximately two hours.

Day Two of the seminar commences at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at approximately 3:30 p.m. Leave is provided for two days, with pay, in accordance with the Collective Agreements.

The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars, as it has been amended over the past few years, is contained on the following page; prospective retirees are urged to read closely these policy provisions and be aware of their application. The registration form for attendance at the 2001 seminars can be found on page 14. Potential participants are reminded that, in order to attend, they must register for a particular seminar. Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before the school year 2003-04 will be eligible to attend. Furthermore, registration must be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance in order to ensure approval of attendance. Given the increasing numbers of teachers eligible to retire, we must adhere strictly to the requirement for early registration. As a result, the Association will reserve the right to refuse acceptance of registration forms at any particular seminar if the registration has not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.

It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements for hotel accommodations, should any be required. When you contact the hotel in question, please reference the fact that you are attending an NLTA function and this should provide a reduced rate which is available to persons travelling on Association related business. Note that accommodation expenses are the responsibility of the teacher.

In order to ensure that seminar participants are able to gain maximum advantage from the presentations, it is our intention to make every effort to keep the seminars to a reasonable size. This means, in effect, that we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come-first-served basis.

NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars

1. The NLTA will make provision for an ongoing program of pre-retirement counselling through the involvement of Benefits and Economic Services staff in

branch workshops, branch meetings, and small group sessions as requested. Elements of the Benefits and Economic Services program relating to retirement planning will be communicated through the use of *The Bulletin*, Infosheets, and special publications.

2. The NLTA will provide a special program of pre-retirement counselling to teachers in the form of annual pre-retirement seminars. Only those teachers who are eligible to retire within two years of the expiry of the school year in which the seminars are held will be permitted to attend. Exceptions will be allowed in the case of teachers required to retire on disability pensions.

3. Pre-retirement seminars will be planned each year by the Benefits and Economic Services Division. The location and number of seminars will be determined on the basis of Association policy as determined from time to time by the Provincial Executive Council.

4. Expenses will be paid (or not paid) for teachers and spouses who attend the pre-retirement seminars in accordance with the following stipulations:
(a) No meal expenses will be paid during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
(b) No accommodation expenses will be paid during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
(c) No child care expenses will be paid for seminar participants during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
(d) Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:
i. Participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation.
ii. Payment for private vehicle shall be at the rate of 6.4¢ per kilometre for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
iii. Travel by public conveyance shall be reimbursed at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
iv. No expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
v. The participating teacher and spouse are expected to travel in the same private vehicle and, consequently, only one claim will be entertained for car meterage.
(e) Any reception(s) held during the pre-retirement seminars will be on a cash basis only.

5. Expenses for the spouse of the retiring teacher shall be provided in accordance with Association policy as stipulated in Section G (Pre-Retirement Counselling).

6. Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only per teacher participant. A teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a spouse.)

7. Teachers attending a pre-retirement seminar must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise. Such determination will be made by the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

8. Directors and Assistant Directors, and spouses, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

9. All participants, in order to attend, must register for a particular seminar. Registration must be received at the NLTA office at least four (4) weeks in advance in order to ensure approval of attendance.

10. The funding mechanism and program content for pre-retirement seminars will be reviewed annually by the Benefits and Economic Services Committee with recommendations being made to Executive as required.

Royal Roads University
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Beginning in July 2001 Royal Roads University, situated in Victoria, British Columbia, is offering an MBA in Executive Management for educational administrators. The Royal Roads MBA is flexible and is designed for mid-career professionals currently involved in administrative, instructional, business or support functions in public or private institutions or organizations. The two-year program is delivered through a combination of Internet-based distance learning and three short (three week) intensive residency sessions. In addition to the core MBA curriculum, the program includes an organizational consulting project and four full-course specialized options in educational administration and management.

For more information, please access the RRU website at **www.royalroads.ca/mba** or e-mail **rrumbas@royalroads.ca**
The toll-free telephone number is **1-877-778-6227**.

2001
PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Social Insurance Number

School Name

School Telephone

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ **Oct. 18-19** – Mt. Peyton, Grand Falls-Windsor
- ☐ **Oct. 25-26** – Albatross, Gander
- ☐ **Nov. 1-2** – Holiday Inn, Corner Brook
- ☐ **Nov. 15-16** – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- ☐ **Nov. 22-23** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Nov. 29-30** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 6-7** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending)

Earliest eligibility date for pension

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Note:
- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2004) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:
Benefits and Economic Services Division
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NF, A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 (*toll free*)

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent

Thinking About Retirement?

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

by DON ASH

Under the Teachers' Pension Act, a teacher is eligible for pension benefit:

a) At age 60 with between five and 24 years of pensionable service.

b) At age 55 or after with at least 25 years of pensionable service.

c) After completing 30 years of worked service* regardless of age.

d) With 29 years of worked service and at least 30 years of pensionable service (reduced pension – percentage reduction is based on the number of months prior to age 55).

* worked service refers to all pensionable service with the exception of university study buy-back (available for purchase prior to 1990).

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

- Apply to NLTA to attend a Pre-Retirement Seminar up to two years prior to your year of retirement.
- Confirm the eligible date of your retirement with the Pensions Division. Tel: 709-729-3931/3932. Fax: 709-729-2070 (Do not resign until eligibility has been confirmed).
- Apply for Teachers' Pension by completing the appropriate "Teachers' Pension" application.
- Submit your resignation to School Board: one month notice is required if retirement is to occur before Christmas; three months notice (March 31) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
- Apply for Severance Pay by completing the "Severance Payment Request" form from Teacher Payroll.
- Confirm/consult with Johnson Incorporated on Group Insurance coverage, Tel: 1-800-563-1528.
- Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting it to the Pensions Division.
- Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Please note the following changes effective upon retirement.

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life Insurance coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid) and is further reduced at age 65.
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker" or is on a forced medical retirement).

Any questions or comments can be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

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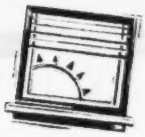

Relationships
Stages of Growth for Men and Women

by MARIE WALL

"Understanding the stages of growth help in accepting natural changes that occur."

I heard a story of an older fisherman who gave his opinion on marriage. "It is like rowing a boat," he said. "If you are not pulling together, you will be going around in circles." Do you remember the first time you rowed with someone? What may have appeared as second nature was down right uncomfortable in the early stages. Learning to thrive in a relationship is a lot like rowing a boat and requires skills which allow you to navigate the waters with ease. Whether it is common sense or learned behaviour, understanding the dynamics of a relationship is useful in navigating the most important connection of your life.

Relationships, like people, grow and develop, and understanding the stages of growth help in accepting natural changes that occur. Each stage includes challenges and the need for resolution brings growth and a more satisfying relationship. This article looks at five stages that are often experienced in a maturing relationship. Men and women will often experience them differently. Specific examples may not be true for every aspect of your experience; however, you may be able to apply some of the information to your own arrangement, whether it be marriage, common law, or any committed long-term relationship.

Negotiation – Newly Married

The first years of marriage are often an exciting time for couples as there are many dreams, hopes and expectations. At this stage negotiation and compromise are necessary when two people who have different rules, values and rituals, unite to make a home. There can be power struggles because both naturally want what is familiar and comfortable for them. Much of the time negotiations take place without understanding and communication regarding what is happening and either or both spouses may wonder why they chose the relationship.

Individuals often marry or commit to a relationship hoping their lives will be better. Surprisingly for some, however, this may also be a time of sadness or grief. When this occurs people are naturally confused and wonder whether a mistake was made. Grief always occurs when there has been an ending, and every beginning results from an ending of some kind. The start of a relationship is the end of being single, the anticipation of one's wedding day and the energy that this requires, and the beginning of learning what marriage means.

During these first years of marriage many women focus on building relationships with their spouse and children. These relationships give meaning and purpose to a woman's life and work outside the home is usually secondary to the main purpose of cultivating these relationships. At this stage in the relationship men concentrate on creating structures for themselves and families, and career often takes the priority. While relationships are part of a man's life, it is being able to provide for the care of the family that validates him as a husband. A woman, on the other hand, finds this validation through her relationship with her husband and children.

Moving through this stage means letting go of past expectations and developing new horizons. It is like rowing your boat with your sight set on a point of land. Once you get there, you have to dream new dreams and together set your sights on new skylines.

Expansion – Infant Children

For many couples wanting to have children is a natural instinct. They want to recreate part of themselves, figuratively and literally. Usually a time of great joy for both spouses, the expansion of the family can also be accompanied by feelings of isolation, frustration, and even depression.

The arrival of children can result in numerous changes for both men and women. Women feel the constant demands on themselves, their space, time and freedom, to name but a few. Men often feel displaced, as attention is now shifted to the children and their needs.

It is necessary for adjustments to be made during this time of expansion. In the midst of these changes the couple now has a huge demand – they must care for their children while caring for themselves and their relationship. Many people are surprised to learn that the greatest gift to their child is to love and cherish their spouse. When children are the center of a love triangle it is confusing for them. When they witness the love of their parents for one another it acts as a mirror that teaches them it is safe and comfortable to love.

Family Life – Young Children

This stage of life with young children is another critical time in your adult relationship. Raising young children puts new and interesting demands on your relationship. There is so much energy and time spent in providing for children financially, physically, and academically that a couple may drift apart. While it is essential to nurture children, paying attention to one another is essential to maintain a healthy balance to the relationship.

Having time with and for each other is necessary. There will be times when urgent matters arise, but it is important to care for each other on a daily basis. If one or both spouses are focussed exclusively on the demands of the children and/or events at work, they will lose touch with the relationship.

When a relationship ends, a predominant comment from men is that they thought the marriage was pretty good, (in another word, tolerable), and they are completely surprised by its ending. A marriage can be a place to just hang out or a place for you to nurture an important relationship. Pay attention, it is worth it.

Letting Go – Teen Children

It is often at this stage in family life that 'mid-life reflection' takes a prominent role. Time, effort, love and affection have been spent nurturing family relationships. The children have grown up and friends take precedence over the family. There is more free time which can often be lonely for both women and men.

Whether we intend to or not, our natural inclination is to ask deep and moving questions. We want to know that our life has been worthwhile. We take stock of what has been accomplished, and look to the future. Since the natural inclination for men had been on the external accomplishments, providing financially, setting structure in place and career advancement, they often begin to ask, "what has all this been for and what about me?" At this time men are often ready to let go of past dreams and to find personal meaning in their relationships. This can be very painful and crowded with doubts and fears. Women may have regrets regarding their lack of attention to public achievements and may consider ways to find meaning in a broader context other than family. When a women asks, "what has all this been for and what about me?", she may opt to continue her education or seek promotions that may be available to her.

Another demand on couples at this time is aging parents who may need physical care, financial assistance or other attention that had not been necessary before. It is even possible that both spouses have parents in need.

This is a very important time in relationships. It has been hard work to get this far and the struggles of family life may have taken a toll. People may wonder if there is any marriage or relationship remaining with their spouse. They need a spark and they don't think it can be at home. Think again! Learning to reconnect with each other in this time of change can provide the spark you are looking for.

Empty Nest – Grown Children

What you foster is what you will have. The empty nest stage is a very demanding time for couples as they deal with the many factors which may come into play. The children are grown, retirement is nearby, and the effects of age are beginning to be felt. Many people think this stage will be a time to travel, to enjoy each other and to catch up on all the things that they did not have time for throughout the earlier years of their relationship.

Research shows that many of us will not have extra money to travel and in very few cases do people start activities that have not been a part of their lives up to this point. So, what to do? There are two things to keep in mind. If you want to travel or play sports in retirement it is essential to integrate them into your relationship through the years. Secondly, looking to money, travel and the like may not be your way to fulfillment. Fulfillment may be accomplished by being reflective. Although this may not come naturally and may have to be learned, reflection can be the means to great satisfaction in your relationship.

So, when you look at your relationship, are you both pulling together or is your boat going around in circles? If it's the latter, focus on the changes necessary to get the boat moving in the right direction.

Marie is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Marie Wall (ext. 265) or Kathy Taylor-Rogers (ext. 242).

Analytic Rating Scales
An Electronic P.D. Experience at www.rubrics.ca

by ROBERTA F. HAMMETT

Rubrics, or analytic rating scales, are associated with a number of current best practices in teaching and learning: performance-based instruction, authentic learning, metacognition, self-assessment, portfolios, problem solving, multiple intelligences theory, inclusion, reflective practice, multi-grade classrooms, case studies, and integration of computer and Internet technologies, to name a few. Thus they are often touted as being the best solution for all problems. However, like all innovations, they come with inherent problems, not the least of which are learning how to use them effectively and how and if to integrate them within current practices and curriculum.

"... teachers, as researchers and reflective practitioners, will have an important role to play in the evaluation of claims about the value of rubrics and their role in the assessment of teacher effectiveness."

In Newfoundland and Labrador, rubrics are being introduced to English language arts teachers in conjunction with the new curricular documents produced by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF). In these curricular documents, rubrics and portfolios (among other strategies and tools) are encouraged as means of accomplishing effective teaching and learning practices. For example, the "Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum" states: *Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning in English language arts. Without effective assessment and evaluation it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective or how best to address student learning needs.*

In this spirit, the document promotes the use of rubrics and several other means to assess student performance and advocates the use of analytic (rating) scales to assign marks. As with all innovations and curricular changes, teachers, as researchers and reflective practitioners, will have an important role to play in the evaluation of claims about the value of rubrics and their role in the assessment of teacher effectiveness.

Professional Development Initiatives

With the introduction of the new APEF curriculum and the provincial assessments, ongoing in Atlantic Canada since 1996, teachers have been required to learn different practices for teaching and assessing learning. Time, geography, and financial and human resources have mitigated against the efficient provision of the needed professional development experiences; thus innovative methods for the provision of in-service learning opportunities are important. Also important are practical educational experiences for pre-service teachers. Opportunities for interacting with and evaluating students' actual texts are essential if the education students are to be well prepared to assume their role as teachers in their own classrooms, responsible for assigning grades and thus influencing the futures of their students.

To address these pre- and in-service needs, a team consisting of Marian Fushell of the Department of Education, Bill Jameson of STEM~Net, and myself worked to develop an interactive Web site that will allow users to practice scoring students' writing using the provincial analytic scoring rubrics. This is a collaborative project between the three institutions, with the Department of Education providing financial support and writing samples, STEM Net hosting the site, and Memorial University of Newfoundland, providing the development and research expertise.

Parents and students, too, may familiarize themselves with this province's assessment strategies and with expectations of students at any given grade level. By comparing their child's or their own writing with the samples of students' writing provided, they may better set goals for improvement and self-directed learning. Teachers may want to refer parents to the site to help them understand how their children's work is being assessed and why. Unfortunately this privileges families with access to computers and knowledge of how to use Internet technologies, underlining the need for support of programs that offer all students and their care givers an equal chance to use and acquire these important tools for learning.

The site has the potential to expand as a professional development resource. New provincial testing initiatives include reading activities and a wider variety of writing assignments. Previous English language arts testing packages have represented a variety of genres, including visual texts. Students were asked to compose an original piece, on the same general theme, in response to the set of texts. The instructions indicated that students might have created a visual representation as their response. Such experiments that invite students to respond in 'other ways of representing' have been less successful, perhaps indicating that neither teachers nor students are comfortable with this new aspect of the English language arts curriculum. All of these will be evaluated using rubrics and analytic rating scales.

The Internet is an ideal venue for providing the resources, information, examples, and interactive experiences students and teachers want and need in order to become less troubled with teaching and assessing responses to non-verbal texts and students representing knowledge in "other ways."

Integrating Technology

Teachers are expected to make use of the new technologies that are increasingly available in their schools, and to integrate computer and Internet technologies into existing curricula. Examples of successful and useful integration can do much to convince teachers that their struggles to use technology might be worthwhile. The many projects of STEM-Net, SchoolNet, Grassroots, and Memorial students' Web pages (see course links from http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~hammett/) demonstrate successful curricular uses of computers that provide models for teachers in their classrooms. A project such as this one illustrates the usefulness of Internet technologies in teachers' own professional development and lifelong learning.

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Provincial Assessments Using Rubrics

The Department of Education, in conjunction with its Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation partners, has engaged in collecting and evaluating samples of writing at four education levels: Primary (Grade 3), Elementary (Grade 6), Intermediate (Grade 9) and Senior (Grade 12). Provincial panels of teachers have been assembled to score samples of process writing gathered from schools across the provinces. In their work, the panels have fine-tuned the criteria of assessment in several categories considered important demonstrators of effective writing. Published reports have described in detail the results of the provincial assessment such as Fushell, 1999, *Intermediate writing assessment 1996 administration: Student performance report*; Fushell & Outhouse, 1998, *A report of the grade 3 writing assessment.*

The Province has evaluated process and demand pieces. Process pieces encourage students to revise their work, and the assessment procedures are consistent with appropriate classroom procedures. In the primary assessment, for example, the writing prompt was: "You are awakened by a dinosaur. Write a story about your adventure." Prior to writing, students were read a story about dinosaurs and engaged in class talk about the book. They were encouraged to plan before writing, but they did so individually. On the second day, students wrote their draft. On the third day, with the aid of a writing checklist, the students engaged in editing and making revisions to their own piece. Then they wrote the "good copy." They also filled in a reflective questionnaire about their writing experience. Procedures are similar at other grade levels.

The rubrics define in detail the criteria for each score. The categories – content, organization, sentence fluency, voice, word choice, and conventions – are generally scored at 5 levels. The rubric for primary assessment excludes voice and includes content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary, and conventions. For convenience, these categories have been renamed on our web site to be consistent with the intermediate ones. Detailed descriptions of each category and level are provided in publications of assessment results and on our web site.

The Interactive Web Site

You are invited to visit the Web site (www.rubrics.ca) to read and score some samples of the writing the provincial panel of teachers scored. Once you have submitted your scores, the site will provide you a comparison chart of your scores, the provincial panel's scores and their justifications, and previous Web visitors' scores by category. In the prototype site available now, only primary and intermediate samples are available for scoring. In the near future elementary and senior samples will be added, as will additional samples to all levels.

The site asks visitors to sign in with their e-mail address and to provide some demographic information. It provides links to rubrics and information about rubrics on the World Wide Web, and there is a bulletin board that allows users to post comments about the interactive scoring experience and other aspects of assessment or teaching in general. Some users may be contacted with a request to respond to a few survey questions.

The site founders hope www.rubrics.ca will prove to be a useful resource for teachers, education students and instructors, parents and students in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Atlantic Provinces, and in all the places the World Wide Web reaches. We welcome comments and questions about the site and about the use of rubrics. We welcome conversations that may develop about the limits and strengths of these and other assessment practices. We encourage questions about standardization and other forms of provincial testing. Look for the bulletin board feature on the site – engage in the learning experience and its critique.

Roberta F. Hammett is Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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The St. Teresa's Primary Reading LEAD Project

by GWEN MAGUIRE

Dr. Julia O'Sullivan ... stated, "I would like to promote the St. Teresa's LEAD project nationally, as a model of exemplary practices."

During the 1998-99 school year, St. Teresa's School in St. John's launched an innovative project in primary reading. School staff across the English grades were concerned about low achievement in Language Arts. There was a consensus among the staff that a radical new approach was necessary and that a "Band-Aid" solution was not sufficient. As traditional teaching practices were not working for all students in this stream, a Literacy project began with students in Grades 1 and 2. In September of 1999, this project was extended into the Grade 3 classes and this model of reading is now in its third year. The project is called the St. Teresa's Primary Reading **LEAD** Project – **L**iteracy, **E**ducation, **A**chievement, **D**evelopment.

Former principal, Dr. Maureen Dunne, and I, as the Reading Specialist, initially developed the project. Over a period of several months a plan evolved that became a reality. Our special services team reviewed research and consulted with experts on reading and literacy. Dr. Julia O'Sullivan, Dean of Education, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario (at the time of establishment of the project Dr. O'Sullivan was working at the Centre for Application of Developmental Science at MUN); Dr. Patricia Canning, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Ms. Martha Sanger, former Primary Language Arts Coordinator; and later Ms. Marg Ryall, Literacy Specialist, School District #10, were invited to act as a sounding board for ideas developed by the team.

The project completely revamped the way that Language Arts was taught in the school. Every student was individually assessed. Several comprehensive informal screening devices were administered to determine individual reading levels and to identify the general nature of any reading difficulty. A literacy profile was started on each student to track his/her reading and writing development through to the end of Grade 3.

While the assessments were ongoing in the fall of 1998, teachers received professional development in the teaching of reading strategies such as phonemic awareness, guided reading, shared reading, paired reading, process writing, running records and classroom management. There were workshops on the Department of Education's Pathways document and reporting mechanisms were developed by both school and district staff that complemented the new district report card.

The students are divided into flexible reading ability groups for the first hour and a half each day. Students from one homeroom class may be spread through four different reading groups for Language Arts. Those reading at or above grade level are usually in the largest group while those who experience difficulty with Language Arts are in small group settings. Any students with identified needs are given additional small group intervention throughout the day.

When a student acquires the skills being taught in one group and is recommended by that teacher, he/she is evaluated by the reading specialist and moved to the next group. This can occur at any time depending on the growth and development of the student's language ability. The instructional approach to teaching language arts is multidimensional and effective strategies from a variety of sources are utilized. For example, students engage in activities such as shared reading/writing, guided reading/writing, and strategic process writing. They are taught to unlock language using phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills. These skills are taught using both systemic instruction and within the context of authentic reading experiences.

Sharon Saunders, Grade 1 teacher at St. Teresa's, with her class of readers.

Prevention and early intervention are the major goals of this project. At the end of Kindergarten each student is individually assessed using a series of informal screeners. Those with identified needs are a priority for extra intervention. While teaching literacy skills is of utmost importance, another major goal of this project is to cultivate a love of reading. Quality children's literature is a large component of this program and students have access to many well-written and beautifully illustrated books at their instructional level.

While the project was extremely exciting, it was not always easy. Acquiring the materials and facilitating professional development took several months. Teachers were challenged to restructure their classrooms and to alter their teaching styles in ways that sometimes felt quite intimidating. Administrative routines had to be reworked and meetings were frequent. Adequate and accurate reporting to parents within the Department of Education Pathways framework was a hurdle to overcome. Parent-teacher conferences had to be restructured. The way was not always clear!

In order to find out if our new approach was indeed working, this initiative became an action research project. During the first year, researchers from Memorial University assessed each student's reading ability in October 1998 and again in May of 1999. This was also done in two control schools. Research results determined there was a substantial and significant improvement at St. Teresa's which was directly attributed to the Literacy Project. A parent survey yielded 100 percent support for the continuation of the program for the following year. Comments from parents included: "She is much more confident about reading than ever before and is willing to take risks."; "Homework is a pleasure not a fight."; "My son is not afraid to try new words now." They loved their new books and were encouraged by their own success. Reading achieved a very high profile.

The community of St. Teresa's is extremely grateful to those agencies which responded to our requests for support. Without them this project would never have occurred. Sources of funding included: the Department of Education; the Avalon East School Board (AESB), the NLTA; the Newfoundland and Labrador Literacy Association; the Congregation of the Sister's of Mercy; the St. Teresa's School Council; and the Knights of Columbus. We also acknowledge the personal support of: our local MHA, Minister Joan Marie Aylward; the Honorable Roger Grimes, former Minister of Education; Brian Shortall, Director and CEO, AESB; Tomi Cleal, former Assistant Director, AESB; Brendan Doyle, former president of the NLTA; Dr. Bill Fagan, Chairperson, Newfoundland and Labrador Literacy Association; and Linda Coles, Language Arts Consultant, Department of Education.

During the second year, the same standardized testing was conducted in October 1999 and again in May of 2000. Analysis of the results were again significant at the Grade 1 and 2 levels. The students in Grade 1 moved from the 24th to the 47th percentile rank which is quite close to the national average and the Grade 2 students moved from the 40th to the 53rd percentile rank which surpassed the national average. Dr. Julia O'Sullivan, who has recently been awarded chair of the Centre of Excellence for the development of literacy for children and adolescents with special needs across Canada, stated, "I would like to promote the St. Teresa's LEAD project nationally, as a model of exemplary practices." This continued success has been enhanced by a close working relationship with Minister Joan Marie Aylward, who has worked with Education Minister Judy Foote to help facilitate additional funding which was essential to the continued success of this exciting initiative.

The most important reward in the implementation of this project has been the new excitement and enthusiasm generated in the students about reading. Guidance Counselor Betty Lou Kennedy stated, "I can say without reservation that this literacy program is the most effective intervention we have used for both academic and social/behavioral improvement. The school culture has become more positive as a result of the students developing self esteem, competence and confidence through reading success. This has also been a very positive experience for parents."

The community of St. Teresa's very gratefully acknowledges the "in kind" contributions of the many partners in the success of this initiative. In particular, it is the team of dedicated teachers and administrators who have brought and continue to bring the LEAD project to fruition. A very special thank you to Sister Joan Gosse and Sister Mary Kelly who volunteer their time to work with individual students and have made an invaluable contribution to the success of this project.

Paul Moores, Principal of St. Teresa's stated, "I was very impressed with the professional sharing, teamwork and commitment among teachers towards this unique and innovative approach to raising literacy levels." Three years ago, results on standardized tests indicated that students from St. Teresa's were among the lowest reading scores in the district. Once again, we appeal to our funding sources to offer their continued support for our project. All the partners in this initiative can be assured that they have helped to make a tremendous difference in the lives of our children – our most precious and valuable resource.

Gwen Maguire is the Reading Specialist, St. Teresa's School. If you would like more information, contact Gwen Maguire or Paul Moores, Tel: 709-579-9111.

Retired teacher, Sister Joan Gosse, volunteers her time to work with individual students.

The Best Holiday from Teaching... is Learning

by GAIL PERRY

"I feel guilty for having the leisure time to make the trip here to learn from them, but they are all very humble and helpful and they tolerate me well."

Teachers love to learn. It's true. That is why we do it. We're in love with learning. One of the highlights of my holiday time is to switch roles, to be the student, to sit in the desk and have no responsibilities, except to myself. To learn something new, to wallow in pedagogy.

This past summer I upgraded my Spanish to be better prepared to secure a high school position at a school where they offer Spanish. As an immersion teacher I felt the only way to study Spanish, much to my husband's chagrin, was to leap into an immersion setting. No need to leave the continent, hay mucha gente espanola en Mexico!

August 13 I was gliding over the arid lands of Northwestern Mexico, on the way to Puerto Vallarta. I had been there before several times, but this time I was headed for the Universidad de Guadalajara. Gail Perry – Spanish student.

Toronto was three hours to the North and East as I looked down at the topographical map under the plane. Most of the other passengers were vacationing and the sound level of their chatter rose steadily as the beaches of Puerto Vallarta drew closer. Many of the voices on board were central Canadian, but intermingled with the dry waspy accents, I could hear the music of children speaking Spanish to their Mama. The sound of the small voices over the view of the reddish earth below excited me. I would be a student in their country. I would learn the language they spoke to their mother. I would be in their world.

The red folds gave way to blue mountains, then green fields, and finally we land on the hot black tarmac. I could feel the close sun baking the skin of the airplane. Outside there is sand, dust, palm trees, and a jet with Aztec-looking artwork on the tail. As the jet slows to a halt I can see groups of dark, smiling faces.

Our door is thrown open. A wave of heat washes into the cabin like you feel when you pull open the oven door to check the muffins. Floating on the tropical heat are words of Spanish. That would be my world for the next two weeks. Mucho, mucho calor y mucho mas espanol!

Every morning at 0600, I check the outside temperature. Every day it's 26C, and still two hours to go before sunrise. Running is out of the question. I'll have to settle for a swim later. Sacrifices must be made for the sake of learning. I board the downtown bus, already crowded with uniformed students and local workers. The old aluminum bus rattling and shaking over the cobblestones is a sharp contrast to the quiet air-conditioned tube that flew me over the mountains. Surrounded by youngsters in blue and white cotton with pigtails and lunch boxes, I drink in their conversation.

"Mira! Has visto el grupo Mana a la television anoche?"

"Si, son tan buenos, estos chicos! Y guapos tambien!"

"Puedes regresar a casa conmigo despues de las clases esta tarde?"

"No sé. Voy a ver. Mama quiere que vaya al mercado con ella. Puedo decirte mas tarde?"

As the mornings go by, I begin to recognize them and I catch some of their names. These children are pretty well-to-do, but how different their world is from the world of my grade school. School days, 35 years ago, I trotted down the hill from my house in Dunville, Placentia Bay, to Grace Elementary School. There I gradually learned a little about the world around me, but visitors who spoke another language were rare. These children in their blue and white uniforms don't give me a second look. They live in one of the most beautiful vacation spots in the world, and visitors from the North are commonplace. But, with my books and my lunch in my backpack, I feel an affinity with them.

Downtown, across the street from the market where I have shopped many times, is Universidad de Guadalajara. I've often passed it as a tourist; however, on this trip, I will be a student in the old fishing village. The classes are small. Two and three per group. Excellent student teacher ratio. It is the slowest season for language students, luckily for us as we benefit greatly from the undivided attention of the staff.

There is Conrad, the American priest from Massachusetts, who, in his whining voice, is so willing to share the highlights of his Vallarta discoveries with the rest of us. Edmund and his 13-year-old daughter, Alisa, are also American, and Renée is from Calgary.

My teachers are Marcos, José, Ruby and Salvador, all from the region and moonlighting as teachers to pay their bills. Ruby is a lawyer, Salvador, a newspaper journalist, and José is a Masters student. Marcos is the only one who chose teaching as a full-time profession. All are highly qualified, extremely capable, yet grossly underpaid. I feel guilty for having the leisure time to make the trip here to learn from them, but they are all very humble and helpful and they tolerate me well.

The school is on the second floor of a two-storey colonial style building, right across the street from "Old Vallarta's" open market. Hovering at the edge of the market, the proprietors voraciously entice you into their store space with the promise that the prices here are the best you'll find anywhere. "Almost free!" they say. The second floor of the school building is actually an open courtyard with professional offices lining the perimeter. The university occupies enough space to have eight small classrooms that, in peak season (wintertime, of course), can hold eight to ten students each. And they are air-conditioned. Unlike the courtyard in front which scorches under the August sun.

I am interviewed and write a placement test to determine my level of fluency and understanding. I place at Level 6 of eight levels. My Spanish courses at Memorial University have paid off. I was delighted at my ability to understand and communicate with the teacher. The course, only two weeks long, is an intensive one, and carried a university creditation.

Two two-hour classes daily of grammar, exercises, and captivating lessons on the politics and culture of Mexico. And just to help us sound native-like in the milieu, a barrage of local expressions and hip comments to cap the day. There is a 30 minute break between classes, just time enough to pop out to the closest café for a chat with the other students. And, of course, to buy one of several bottles of water for the day.

One couple studying there came from Iceland, and since Spanish was our only common language... well... you get the picture. We provided great entertainment for the young woman who served us every day. She chuckled to herself more than once at the interlocutions passing back and forth.

I ended up with a 95 in my course. The teachers were very generous with their congratulatory remarks. I want to return and finish the last two levels. Hopefully, one day I can share my knowledge of the Spanish language with high school students as their Spanish teacher. I'm grateful to the NLTA for helping with the expense. And even though I still had to reach pretty far into my pockets, I feel it was a worthwhile experience. The best holiday from teaching... is learning.

Gail Perry is a teacher at Beaconsfield Junior High School in St. John's.

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Prostate Cancer Awareness
Knowledge is Survival

by GRAHAM MERCER

I retired from teaching in June, 2000. My teaching career began in September, 1970 as a classroom teacher at Persalvic High School in Victoria, Conception Bay. I served as principal of Persalvic High from 1988-97 and completed my teaching career at Carbonear Collegiate after Persalvic High had closed in June, 1997. I proudly recall my teaching career, especially History classes which provide me with some of my fondest memories. The lively discussions and intriguing historical debate, which were present in many of those classes, serve today as a life-long connector to the many students of my teaching career. "It's always amazing, when we meet, how quickly we connect to a particular class and relive a special moment in time".

"Prostate cancer is an insidious disease that is fought through early detection, knowledgeable patients and ongoing research. It is the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Canadian men."

In the fall of 1999, my world and that of my family and friends received a sudden jolt. Because of family history, prostate cancer awareness and testing had become rather routine. Although prepared for the possibility, nothing compares to that moment in the doctor's clinic when he informs you that you have cancer. Following the reality check, critical decisions were made. Fortunately, in my case, it was detected in its early stages. On December 2, 1999, I had successful surgery. Today, with regular follow-up checkups, everything seems fine and I have resumed a normal and very active life.

There is a message in this story. In February 2001, I decided that retirement was only a figure of speech. I now devote my energy to promoting prostate cancer awareness and have accepted a position with the Canadian Cancer Society, Newfoundland and Labrador Division, with a primary focus on developing a provincial work plan in the area of prostate cancer awareness, advocacy and research.

Prostate cancer is an insidious disease that is fought through early detection, knowledgeable patients and ongoing research. It is the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in Canadian men. It can happen to any man at anytime. More than 18,000 Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, so don't be complacent.

All men 50 years old, or 40 if prostate cancer has occurred in the family, should have a regular annual prostate checkup, which should include a DRE and/or a PSA test. Ask your doctor for the test results. Discuss with him/her the benefits and limitations of early detection and diagnosis. On the basis of available information and in consultation with your physician, you must decide if undergoing these tests is in your best interest. Knowledge is survival, so learn about prostate cancer, its symptoms and treatments. If your story includes prostate cancer, make sure it has a happy ending. Try to discover cancer before it discovers you. Remember, a regular checkup can be the difference between your life and death.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, you may reach Graham Mercer at 709-753-6520 or by e-mail: grmercer@ccs.nf.net. Presentations and/or discussions can be arranged.

RESOURCES

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Special Places consists of ten interactive lesson plans, for Grades 4, 6, 7 and 10, with student activities and a complete lesson outline. These outreach lessons, using case studies from the seven Atlantic national parks have been designed for classroom use and a visit to a park is not necessary for their completion. Each illustrated lesson is designed to include a summary, objectives/learning outcomes, curriculum links, duration, teacher and student background information, procedure, evaluation, extension and references.

To obtain more information about this project, contact: Denise Hansen, Heritage Presentation, Parks Canada – Atlantic Service Centre, Historic Properties, Upper Water Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 1S9, Tel: 902-426-4591, Fax: 902-426-7012, e-mail: denise_hansen@parkscanada.gc.ca.

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May 16-18, 2001

Hotel Gander. Contact: Harry O'Reilly, Symposium Coordinator – ARBD Group, 18 Kent Place, Gander, NF, A1V 2E9, e-mail: harryo@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-256-7308, Fax: 709-651-4565, Symposium web site: www3.nf.sympatico.ca/harryo.

SAC CONFERENCE AND AGM

May 30 - June 1, 2001

Previously scheduled for April 4-6, 2001. Further details will be forthcoming to administrators in the near future.

ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION IN CANADA (AMTEC) CONFERENCE

June 3-6, 2001

Halifax. Sessions focus on the latest issues and developments on topics such as using technology in the classroom, copyright law, instructional design, distance education and adaptive technologies in learning environments. Check out the AMTEC web page (www.amtec.ca/amtec2001) for registration and further information.

SOCIETY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGH EDUCATION (STLHE) 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 13-16, 2001

St. John's. The STLHE conference has a long-standing reputation for excellence in providing an interactive teaching- and learning-related program to educators from across North America and beyond. Registration information and a preliminary program can be found on the STLHE 2001 web site at www.mun.ca/stlhe2001.

THE ATLANTIC CONFERENCE OF HOME ECONOMISTS

June 22-23, 2001

Truro, NS. The Nova Scotia Home Economics Association invites you to attend this Atlantic Conference of Home Economists across Canada. Registration: CHEA members $60; non-members $75. For a registration form e-mail kgreenfield@ns.sympatico.ca. Or mail to Katherine Bourbonniere, 46 Archie Street, Antigonish, NS, B2G 1L9.

THE 15TH BIENNIAL CAEDHH CONFERENCE

July 8-10, 2001

Newfoundland School for the Deaf, St. John's. The Canadian Association for Educators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CAEDHH) invites you to join the 15th Biennial National Conference in 2001. "Casting Toward the Future" will encompass presentations on a variety of issues relevant to the field of educating Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. For further information contact co-chairpersons Ann Shortall or Cathy Lawlor at 709-364-1234. CAEDHH web site: www.stemnet.nf.ca/CAEDHH.

TRAVELLING INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES

September 27-29, 2001

Halifax. Share information/knowledge about learning disabilities with experts from across North America. To receive a registration package, e-mail: ldans@ns.sympatico.ca. For more information visit the conference web site at www.nsnet.org/ldans or contact Paige McDicken at 902-423-2850.

BREAKTHROUGH STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND COUNSEL TROUBLED YOUTH

October 4-5, 2001

Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Sponsored by ADD Central, School District #5 and Central SCAN. During the two-day workshop participants will learn 200 powerful, up-to-the-minute strategies for working with their most challenging students. This workshop is packed with the newest and best techniques to turn around violent, abused, withdrawn, unmotivated, ADHD, defiant, impulsive, delinquent, and at-risk children and youth ages 5-18. If you're a counsellor, teacher, psychologist, principal, social worker, student assistant, or foster parent, you will need these real-world tools to safely and successfully teach and counsel in our turbulent times. For a registration kit, call Keith Adey at 709-489-5796. Registration is limited to 100 participants.

MUSIC

October 19-21, 2001

St. John's. Contact: Mary Dinn, Tel: 709-579-9111, Fax: 709-579-2448. For hotel reservations call Patricia Martin at 1-800-933-0506 (Mon.-Fri., 9-5). Credit card required.

DATES/DEADLINES

MAY 2001

May 7	Deadline: Notification by Board of layoff
May 13-19	Branch Election Week
May 17	Deadline: Professional Development Fund applications

JUNE 2001

June 8-9	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	Deadline: Notification by Board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

JULY 2001

July 31	Deadline: NLTA Scholarship Applications